

KHAZIR MALIK SAFAI

The sculpture reproduced on the end paper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Sudhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From: Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.
Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

Khazir Malik Safai

by
Shad Ramzan

Translated by
Mohammad Aslam



SAHITYA AKADEMI

Khazir Malik Safai: English translation by Mohammad Aslam of monograph in Kashmiri by Shad Ramzan, Sahitya Akademi, 1999

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Translator's Note

Translating from one language to another, especially when the two languages are culturally alien, is a task with inherent difficulties. English and Urdu, unlike European languages, share very little, in structures and functions, with each other. As it is, I faced difficulties in translating Dr. Shad Ramzan's monograph *Khazir Malik Safai*. But a desire to make our past literary heritage in our mother tongue known to non-native readers encouraged me to undertake this difficult task.

There was another difficulty. The author, Dr. Shad Ramzan, is a poet himself. His prose-writing is largely coloured by his penchant for figurative language. As a creative writer, he plays with words in the same way as the poet on whom he wrote this monograph. Translating emotion words into English would not be desirable. The purpose was to make this literary figure known to common readers. I therefore, decided to remain faithful to the author's ideas only and use an idiom that would be understood by the majority of readers.

Safai was a Sufi. In his poetry, the splendid image of Prophet Mohammad emerges throughout. He is sometimes referred to directly and sometimes indirectly through expressions like, 'niaga:r', 'hura pari:', 'ya:r', etc. Since devotional literature is deeply cultural, especially religious in character, it becomes very difficult to convey such

culture-specific feelings in a culturally alien language. In this respect, Kashmiri poets being extremely devoted to the Prophet and Muslim saints, use hyperbolic language in their hymns. For fear of quaintness I have not attempted translations of poems where the Prophet is directly mentioned. However, where his image is only indirectly presented, the translations have been provided.

I hope the readers would find the English translation of *Khazir Malik Safai* interesting, and feel motivated to know more about this maker of the Indian literature.

Mohammad Aslam

Preface

Living in the present but preserving the past traditions has been a speciality of poets like Muza Ghalib. Such a feeling we get when we read Khazir Malik Safai. He did not only study his contemporary environment but also the past. He had a thorough knowledge of Kashmiri traditions and Persian poetry. He took help from both and, thus, emerged as a unique poet.

In Kashmiri literary history, Safai occupies a unique position in two ways: one, he edited his poetic collection before his near-contemporary Wahab Hajini, two, he tried his skill in almost all poetic forms, coming close to Mehmud Gami. He benefitted from Rasul Mir, and made many valuable additions to Kashmiri Sufi poetry. However, one wonders why Safai's works remained unknown for a century and why our literary scholars remained ignorant of this literary figure.

He would have remained still unknown, had Professor Margoob Banihali not mentioned him to me in 1980 and hinted at his literary achievements. After a great struggle I got some of his writings. Realising the merit of the literary heritage of Safai my teacher, Professor Rehman Rahi, urged me to bring out a booklet on Safai's life and works, which I did in 1984. Thereafter I wrote about him in different journals, making this literary figure known to the public. Recognising the importance of this literary

discovery, the Cultural Academy decided to edit the complete works of Safai, and assigned the task to me (it will be soon out). On the other hand, the Sahitya Akademi asked me to write on him a monograph as well. For this I am grateful to Mr. Yousuf Teng, Director General Culture, who helped me in every way. I thank Professor Rehman Rahi who was always there to advise me. I express my heart-felt thanks to Professor Margoob Banihali who helped at every step. I thank my well-wisher, Professor Mohammad Zaman Azurdah. I am extremely thankful to Safai's descendents who preserved his works for about a century. This shows their ability for literary appreciation among them. Master Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh (Akahal), Abdul Majid Malik, Asadullah Malik, Abdul Ahad Malik, Mohammad Iqbal Pahloo and Ghulam Hassan Dar (Bogund) are specially worth mentioning. I thank my friend Mr. Meraj Turkani who despite his engagements calligraphed this monograph. My younger brother Mushtaq Ahmad deserves thanks for proof reading the manuscript.

Shad Ramzan



Transliteration Chart

PHONETIC SYMBOLS

<i>Vowels</i>		<i>Consonants</i>	
a	آ	b	ب
a:	اَ	p	پ
i	ی	ph	پھ
i:	یِ	t	ت
u	اُ	th	تھ
u:	اَ	t	ٹ
o	اَو	th	ٹھ
o:	اَو	th	ٹھ
ou	او	j	ج
ay	اے	c	ج
ai	آئی	h	ح
		x	خ
		d	د
		d	ڈ
		r	ر
		z	ز
		ts	ژ
		sh	ش
		z	س
		ts	ش
		tsh	خ
		s	ف
		s	ق
		gh	ک
		f	گ
		q	ل
		k	ک
		g	ن
		l	ل

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Life Sketch

The literary history of Kashmir is shrouded in such a mist that no one can say how many literary stars remain hidden behind. Had they not been clouded over, they would have added new dimensions to our language, and raised further our culture to its heights. This misting of stars did not happen in the past only but the present century, too, has experienced one such occurrence that deprived our literary history of a unique poet.

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the Kashmiri language produced a multifaceted poet, Khazir Malik Safai, who devoted his whole life to the language and culture of our region. However, historians did not mention him until 1980. Abdul Ahad Azad, author of *Kashmiri Language and Poetry*, the first ever work on the subject, does not mention Safai in his work, although we do know that his literary peregrinations preceding the writing of the book took him, among other places, to Koshpur, a place near Safai's village, where he met Peer Mohi-ud-Din Miskeen¹, author of a Mathnavi *Sohini Mahiwal* and whom he discusses in detail in the book (Vol 2, p.433)

It is worth nothing that Safai lived only five miles away from Miskeen's village and he had earned fame not only as a poet but also as a religious scholar and Sufi (a Muslim Mystic). The villagers accept this fact and still remember

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him with reverence. How could a sensitive scholars like Azad let him go unnoticed, is not easy to understand, especially when we know that Khazir Malik Safai was no ordinary poet. However, a diamond does not lose its splendour even when hidden under stones, or the sun on warming the earth even when hidden behind the clouds. The same is true of this literary luminary of Kashmiri.

It is impossible to write an authentic account of Khazir Malik's life because he lived in oblivion for about a century. A researcher has to be extra careful. However, on the basis of some of his writings, folk traditions and oral evidence from some elderly villagers, the present author has prepared Safai's life-sketch in the hope that it paves the way for further research and brief evaluation.

Safai's date of birth is neither documented anywhere nor does he himself say anything about it in his mathnavi, *Moulavi Nama*, in which he writes, to some extent, about his creative achievements. His death is nonetheless recorded. On his death, Ama Lala² wrote a long elegy which throws light on different aspects of his personality. According to this written evidence, Khazir Malik Safai died on the morning of Wednesday, 7 Saffar 1339 H. Corresponding to 1920 A.D. Local traditions speak of his attaining the age of 75 and an examination of his works seems to testify to this. In the light of this, one can fix 1264 H as Safai's year of birth (1848 A.D.).

Safai's native village was Khul, in Noorabad, which is twenty miles from Kulgam (in Pulwama District of Kashmir). Safai was born in this village but moved to another village, Pohul, which is three miles from Kulgam, where he spent the rest of his life. It was the same village where his father Huzur Malik had migrated after leaving his village. Moulavi Ama Lala's elegy referred to above is given hereunder:

Chu be:sak marun al 'man hund gatai
Pyava:n a:sma:na ánhā marnai kṛatai

When scholars die there is darkness everywhere
With the sky hurling down thunderbolts.

darga Malik ji Khazir nek fa:l
tam' kor besu:i xoda irtiha:l

Dauntless Khazir Malik the kind
Voyaged to God's abode

su thod sal 'ka sal 'kan xas o:s
tamis ja:m irfa:n ba exla:s o:s

A great saint himself dear to saints he was
Endowed he was with hidden knowledge

qalam te:z tamsund guhar rez o:s
soxan xiz bas sakar arme:z o:s

Through the magic of his pen he showered pearls
He talked but in sweet tongue

tasani:f tamsind hazara:n haza:r
nau:t manaqib ku'ub be:summa:r

Works he has thousands and more
Hymns, eulogies and homilies

ahind wasaf ka'iyah hyakai bo lekhit
dafa:ar bari:th gai qalam gai t/aki:t

His qualities I cannot enumerate
A mere attempt to do so would exhaust all papers and ink

gohan a:s majlis sama roi he:th
kara:n a:s usa:q parvar:na ga:th

His presence lit up the meeting
Lovers circled him as moths round the lamp

amav kor raza bar qaza ex'iyar
aman his gov raza xudwandga:r

Readily he heeded Death's call when it came
Pleased was God with him at his resignation

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zi haq irjai na:d tas ya:m n:v
bawasal xuda sa:d xanda:n dra:v

Return the call from Truth he got
Happily journeyed at God's command

chu haftum safar yeli tami kor safar
su bodwaru hyund doh tami kor sakhar

Seventh Safar it was and Wednesday
When he embarked upon his last journey

Considering Safai's creative power and learning one can see that he had inherited from his ancestors much that helped him in achieving his literary and scholarly attainments. It is said that his father, Huzur Malik, was an acknowledged Persian Arabic scholar and spiritualist of his village who catered to the spiritual needs of anacademic disciples also. Khazir Malik grew up in this academic environment. It was the time when the Kashmiris were living a life of slavery and poverty under the Dogra rulers. The hilly areas of Narvav were, in especial, economically backward. Around this time the rains failed, and drought and famine hit the area forcing the people to flee from their villages. It was during this exodus that Huzur Malik left his place, Khul, and settled down in Pohul. Pohul is a large village in Divsar Prang in Kulgam Tehsil; it is situated on the Qazigund road along the River Veshu.

Khazir Malik grew up in this village. In course of time his father married him to a rich man's (Hamza Bhat's) daughter, Aziz Ded. She was kind hearted and pious. They had three sons and a daughter whose grandchildren are still living in Pohul and Akahal. It is important to mention here that Safai's ancestors were originally from Panzyur³ in Shopian. His great grandfather, Imam Malik, had left his village and settled at Khul, and his grandson, Huzur Malik, had shifted from his village and settled at Pohul. This fact is related in detail by Safai in his *Moulivi Nama*:

daradmando me kun *dama* rozu
kenh soxan ho:s *dāth* kanav bozu

Sympathiser! listen to me for awhile
Lend me your ear while I speak

nami ka'ib chu *dar* jeha:n mashu:r
Khazir arfan Malik su Ibni Huzur

Known in the world the writer is
Khazir alias Malik the son of Huzur

su chu Ibni Malik Ghulam Rasool
ne:k marda su bo:z ahli qabool

He is the son of Malik Ghulam Rasul
Gentle he is and popular among the people

su chu Ibni Malik Ziaullah
dar fana tam lobun baqa billah

He is the son of Ziaullah
In morality he found eternity

ba'ba chu *tami* sund Malik Ibrahim
ne:k si:rat ba'e'fiqa:di sali:m

His father is Malik Ibrahim
Charactered, kind and faithful

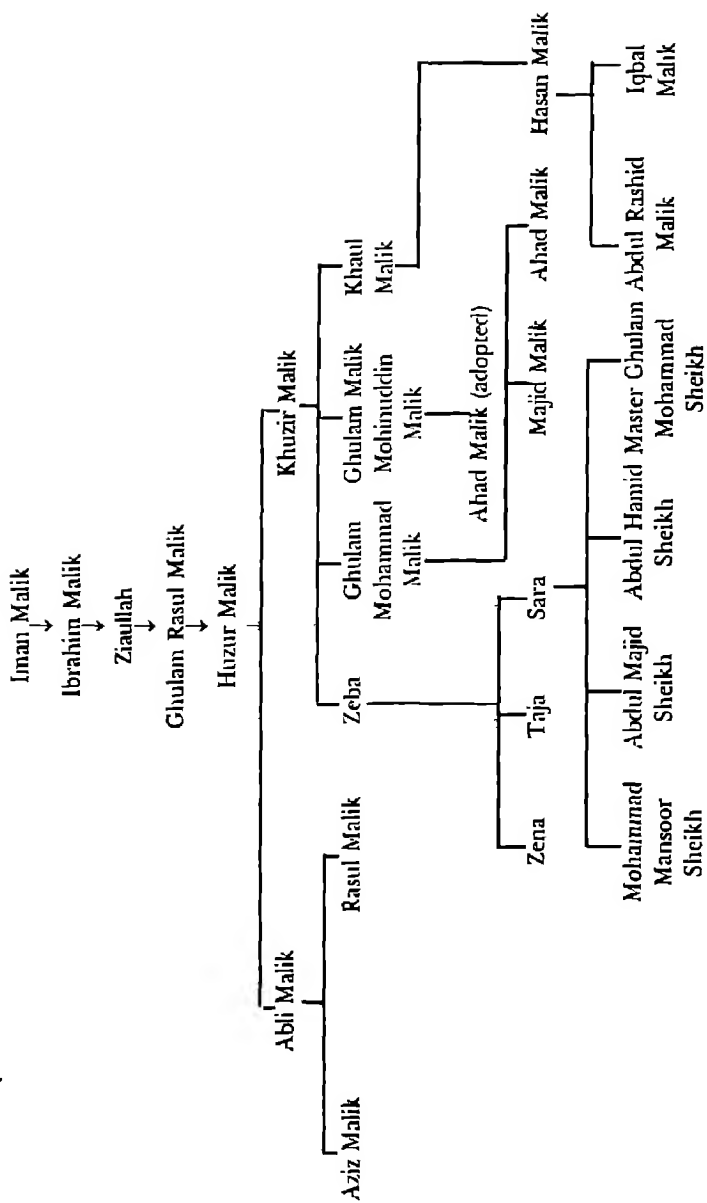
sui Iman Malik *tamisund* chu pidar
panziruk se:r mara*d* sui saf*dar*

Iman Malik is his father
The lion of Panzir, known for his valour

Narava:vas an*dar* ba qasbai khu:l
milkiomira:s jumla faro usu:l

At Narvav in the town of Khul
The source of our inheritance and things all

This family tree is drawn below:



Literary Background

It is said that owing to a curse from his father Khalil Malik the eldest son died an early death. The youngest son was ingenuous and the middle one, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Malik, was like his father, a good scholar of Persian and Arabic. He was pious, and strictly followed the shariah, and remembered the Holy Quran by rote. He composed verses in Persian and Kashmiri under the pen-name of Ghulam Mehdi. Ama Lala writes about him thus in an elegy:

xasur:an su Mehdi Malik nar yas
su bisyar husyar rosan nafas

Mehdi Malik in particular,
was wise and enlightened

chu qayam muqam pidar beguma:n
tamis gausulazam setha maharban

Undoubtedly is the father surrogate
To him is favourably disposed Ghaus the Great¹

A sample of Mehdi's poetry is given below:

kar ata thod su jalvair anvar
misli samsonahar xuzbiye di

Bestow on us a gleam from your radiance
Like the day and the sun help me

taz gul chuk az sahilaula:k
photavun nav bahar xuzbiye di

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A fresh flower you are from the king
Blossoming new spring help me

ghula:m mehdi vana:n su ibnī xazir
madah co:n ifixar xuzbiye dī

Ghulam Mehdi the son of Khazir
Praising you, my pride, help me

There is evidence that Khazir Malik Safai started his literary career after completing his religious and school education. He had started his education at the age of seven with Wali Peer of Tsvalgam. There, he completed the Quran in seven months. This is mentioned by Safai in his *Moulavi Nama* in this way:

motasar umri haft sa:l be chus
misli gul pholmutan gulala ba chus

So seven years of age am I
Like a flower among flowers

rochmutan majji mal' dar pardah
az diloja:n naba:z parvardah

With indulgence and loving care
My father and mother brought me up

darasxa:nas ba suzhas pari:th
sanz na sama:na liba:s rut si:ri:th

Spruced up and preened I was
When at school I was put

dar tsavalgom nis wali pi:ras
go:s masgu:l alim-o-taqri:ras

At Tsvalagam⁵ to Wali Peer apprenticed
Myself I devoted to learning and elevation

dar saboro:z daras chu ba para:n
korum sahnai retan me xatni qora:n

Day and night read I lessons
In seven months finished the Quran

Pas porum var:riyah ki:ta:bo sabaq
daz navi:dgı bayaraiy haq

Read I vast number of books
Happily and with the grace of God.

tas wali pi:ras vavin rahmat
zanh fı ditsnamna mehna-to-zehmat

May blessing pour on Wali Peer
Never did he enjoin labour on me

ne:k marda su a:limo a:il
dar tasavuf sethah su thod ka:mil

A scholar he was and a devout pious man
A mystic of a high order

os a:da:thı tamis bahar bresvar
ba: hama:il su hazrei darba:r

Every Thursday without fail
He turned up with a copy of the Quran

dar huzur sehansa:hi sa:da:t
mir sayid husain para:n a:ya:thı

At the Court of Mir Sayed Husain"
And recited passages of the sacred book

On completing his Arabic education with his first teacher, Wali Peer, Safai went to his native village, Khul, where he got further education from Maulana Munnawar of Nurabad who, according to Safai, was a great scholar and mystic:

tas patai gos na:ba kun ila
juz muhammad munawar mulla

Thereafter I went to none
Except Mohammad Munnawar Mulla

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qasba khul su molvi mataz
betama neriya az agraz

In the town Khul lived the Moulavi
Selfless, good, without greed

o:s mula ta su:fi-o-za:hid
zulkarama:thi roz sab abid

Was learned, mystical and righteous
did miracles and worshipped day and night

tas nis parim varyah ta:li:m
tas nis lob me iza-to-taqvi:m

I got from him knowledge great
I got from him respect and fame

It has already been mentioned that Safai left his village Khul to settle down permanently at Pohul, where he met Moulavi Ghulam Rasool Shah who hailed from Kutha. From him, Safai got initial training in spiritualism. About it, he writes:

akh doha gua ta su:fi:maqbu:l
me nis wo:t sui golam rasu:l

One day it was that Ghulam Rasool
Sufi of fame came to me

bahro var az masa:ix kibar
mus:tafi:d o:s sui az abra:r

Taught he had been by erudite scholar
Benefitted he had from all

tarbiyat dar salu:k tami karnam
zikir azka:r varyah parnam

Trained he me in Saluk⁷
Read he to me numerous words mystique

gau vana:n ta la:ta:li:f xamsa
custo ca:lakh athi vatei lamsa:

Went on he saying with the five senses
Follow this path with your nits about you

nafi isba:t t̄am vonum t̄ajvīz
kar tsa fikran ta zikranai tamīz

Suggested even yes or no.⁸
make difference in fikr and zikr⁹

Nevertheless, Safai's thirst for religious and spiritual knowledge remained unquenched and he sought admission in a school at Chamba Gund, Kulgam. The school was adorned by Khawja Khazir, a great teacher. Safai's passion for learning was so great that he enrolled there at the age 34 years. According to him, it was 1298 H.

dar sana arnamath be nafsinafi:s
chamba gondas andar bo tadri:s

In the year '98 I found myself
At Chamb Gund for acquiring education.

chus hechan xandgi hisa:bo kita:b
kyazi duniya chu a'limi asba:b

Am learning to read and write, and to maintain domestic accounts.
For this world is a world of cause and effect

It was the time when Safai came across a renowned mystic of his times, Maulana Gul Mohammad Shah, who is still remembered as a great scholar and sufi.

Maulana Gul Mohammad Shah¹⁰ was a great Persian poet, though, at times he would write in Kashmiri also. His pen-name was 'Gul'. His poetic talent is reflected in his Persian mathnavi *Yusuf Zalikha* unpublished till date. Those well versed in Persian who read this mathnavi (the present author made it available) say that it is a classic in Persian literature, and if published, would rank the writer among the top-most poets in Persian.

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Gul Mohammad was the last spiritual teacher of Safai, who in turn, became a true disciple of his great teacher. How these two people met in Khawaja Khazir's school is related by Safai in the *Moulvi Nama*:

kajkui vaq vo:t nesaf niha:r
darsxa:nai phola:n chu zan gulza:r

It was noontime with the sun at meridian
The school looked like a burgeoning graden

na:zni:nah paka:n darasna:
ba:arakalla:h habatan hasna:

A portly person was seen walking
God's Grace! How stately!

o:s xoja xazir asi vosta:d
as adab ru:d tas his usta:d

Khawja Khazir our teacher
Stood upright before him.

na:zni:nas karan sala:mo Kala:m
tami á va:pas karis javabi sala:m

And paid him courtesy
Which was kindly acknowledged.

xoja za:dan dopus kariv safaqath
sa:n majlis vachith kariv ma:kath

The Knawja requested him to be kind enough
To make an address the gathering there.

na:zni:nas doupus chni ma: fursath
chus ba dar rahravi pakin cham vath

Whereupon he said that hard pressed he was for time
A traveller he was and had to walk on.

yem dopus pas kariv hukma:
kenh karu kenh vanun kenh tulun ma:

The teacher said 'At you beck and call am I
Is there anything I could do for you?'

ʔam dopus din me sati sa:girdah
tsa:tan andar yus chu java:n marda.

He said 'Can you spare from among your pupils
Who is in the flush of his youth?'

xoja xaziran ŋ von akis tsa:tas
"divsar" ʔam gatsh tsa molviyas

Khwaja Khazir turned to a pupil and said,
'Go with Moulvi Sahib upto Divasar.'

ʔam dopus me yi tsa:th chum na:baka:r
yem dguʔus bya:kh a:qal husya:r

He said 'I would not have this pupil'
Thereupon the teacher chose another clever and smart.

movi: chus karan isa:rai me kun
sar:nai manz buhoi akui sozun

But Moulvi Sahib pointed to me saying,
'Of all these pupils I would be have this one'

ʔami dopus chumna ʔaqaŋ zaba:n
tsa:tan manjar chu tsa:th a:lisa:n

He said, 'I am robbed of my power of speech
Of all the pupils he is the best'.

ʔam dopus bas me yohai baka:r
ʔas siva bya:kh chumna: baka:r

He said, 'I need only him
Without him I need none:'

dar dil a:sam panani arazmandi
sati pakanas karam-me xorsinŋ

I felt a great urge to go with him
And glad I was to say so.

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xoja xazras dopum soxan ko:rah
dra:s hamrah gul mohammad shah

I pleaded with Khawja Khazir to let me go
And left I then with Gul Mohammad Shah

In this way, Khazir Malik Safai left with Gul Mohammad Shah and the very first meeting bound them into an everlasting teacher-taught relationship. Both lived together and Gul finally died in Safai's home. The graves of Gul and Safai are in the Peervani graveyard near a shrine in Pohul. About it Ama Lala writes:

dapa:n na:v *tath* maqbaras pi:rvani
nakhai sahrahas kya subavani

This graveyard is called Peervani
What a sight it is on the highway!

The State Cultural Academy erected a tombstone on Safai's grave in 1987 on which is inscribed:

It is said that Khazir Malik Safai was the first poet of our language the verses of whose poetic collection were arranged on the basis of their rhymes according to the Arabic alphabet. Safai lived for a long time in an epoch of obscurity which is the product of our slavery. The importance of his voluminous contribution to our literature is now being recognized.

The Cultural Academy commemorates him every year, a tradition started by me in 1982.

Safai was tall and had a robust body. That is why his teacher compared him to a camel. He was temperamentally simple and serious. His dress was also simple, a tweed pheran, a turban or, at times, a fez cap on his head and wooden sandals on his feet. Some of the objects used by him are still cherished by his relatives and devotees.

Hundreds of devotees would throng his house everybody to acquire religious and spiritual knowledge. Because of a large influx of visitors, his kitchen would remain open day

and night. Mohammad Ramzan of Bugund was the cook. Safai would himself attend on his guests and nobody came out hungry. Ama Lala writes about this in the following verses:

faqī:ran ta pi:ran diva:n na:nao:b
fi di:sith gatsha:n dusmanan dil kaba:b

To saints and beggars he gave bread and water
Seeing this his enemies hearts burnt.

gatsha:n bro:tha mehmanan qadarda:n
kara:n barxazir o:s dastar xā:n

Received he his guests in person
And shared with them the food that was served.

Safai was a great scholar of Persian and Arabic. He was not only a *hafiz*¹¹ but also understood delicate quranic issues. It is said that he translated the Quran also but it has not been traced so far. If traced, it would rank him high among the translators of the Quran. Recognising Safai's eruditions and spiritual elevation Ama Lala likens him to Maulana Rum¹².

kara:n o:s ta 'li:m talqi:n di:n
chu besak doyum molvi: bilyaqi:n

He would expound the Scripture so well
That you thought he was another Moulavi

kara:n faraz da'im ada har zama:n
amis a:s zikri xuda bar zaba:n

He always offered his prayers in time
And had God's name ever on his tongue.

gohan a:s majlis sama ro:l he:th
kara:n a:s usa:q parvana gath

A refulgent candle, he illuminated his audience
They doted on him as moths round the candle.

His disciples were many who acquired spiritual knowledge from him. Tradition puts their number very high but the following are noteworthy:

Ahad Dar (of Bugun)
 Ghani Bhat (of Pohul)
 Rahim Dar (of Sani Gam)
 Wahab Dar (Bugund)
 Ruma Vagay (of Islamabad)
 Ama Bhat (of Chadar Pora)

Among these, Ahad Dar of Bugund was Safai's favourite and his friend. Ahad Dar was an acknowledged calligrapher of his time who wrote most of Safai's works. A modern calligrapher cannot but admit his artistic excellency. Safai mentions him at several places in his poetry. Two examples would make it clear:

do:san manz do:s^hah ash pur tami:z
 na:v chus abdul ahad sonui azi:z

Among friends a friend, urbane and suave
 His name is Abdul Ahad, beloved by me.

chus pi:dar abdul waha:b arfan chu da:r
 ga:m bogund a:dvani manz na:mda:r

His father Abdul Wahab alias Dar
 Famous in village Bogund in Advani
 — *Baghi Shuhada* (Martyr's Garden)

kar ki^h:bat yiman isrran
 bogandak ami ahad da:ran

Calligraphed he all these mysteries
 The man from Bugund, Ahad Dar.

mil anmbri: ta ka:gaz hari:ri
 vaqa pi:ri: karum das^hgiri

Purple ink he used and soft paper
 Help me (O, God) in my old age.
 — *Munajat* (Hymns)

Abdul Ghani Bhat was an educated man and practised Ayurved. The present author has seen him personally but, unfortunately, I had no knowledge of Safai during his life time. He would have thrown light on many aspects of Safai's life. He was also related to Safai. Writing about him, Safai says:

sud gani: bat qari:b az du:ri
ibni ramza:n bat ba mashu:ri

Ghani Bhat, close to my heart though so distant
Famous he was as the son of Ramzan Bhat.

avlad o:s hamzan bat xos aṭa:r
ibni sala:m ne:k-o-ka:r

Son he (Ramzan) was of the well mannered Hamza Bhat
Son of Abdus Salam, gentle and kind.

juma bat aba chu mashu:ri:
ibni a:lam ki az faṭṭḥ puri:

Juma Bhat his father was famous
Who was the son of Alam from Fateh Pur.

Out of all his disciples only Wahab Dar composed verses. A considerable portion of his works is preserved in manuscript form. He is said to have been tall and black. Safai called him 'habshi' (negro).

Little is known when and at what age Safai began his literary career. It can be inferred from the corpus of his poetry that he started writing at an early age, and its quality suggests that he was a born poet.

It is said that he had a passion for music. He was particularly charged by the jingling of women engaged in pounding paddy. The inspiration led him to poetic composition. Whatever be the truth of all this, music is food to mystics and poets, and Safai too was a milomaniac. That is why he says:

sad a:fri:n maxmu:ranai
sad marhaba: mansu:ranai

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A hundred applauds to the drunk
A hundred praises to the successful

boza:n chi yim asqun raba:b
munkir nabar xaroxara:b

They it is who listen to love's music
And those who oppose it — let them go the wall.

OR

isolan andar chu kastur
daza:n kya asiqa ponpu:r

In the fire-place is the *kastur*¹
The love-stricken moth is all ablaze.

vaza:n kyasa:z santur
grazan se:ta:r la'ya:

How revishing the notes of the santoor!
The sitar too is playing, my love.

Safai was a sunni Muslim by faith. He was a strict follower of the Shariah, who was thoroughly conversant with recodite matters. His scholarship shows through his writings and is confirmed by local tradition also. The elders of his village say that he would not explain delicate Quranic issue in his private meetings but would go to mosque to explain the divine verses. On such occasions, he lost his grip over himself and wept bitterly. Ama Lala depicts this picture in the following verses:

He would expound the scripture so well
That you thought he was another Moulvi.
A refulgent candle, he illuminated his audience
They doted on him as moths round the candle.

His poetry is witness to his deep understanding of the innermost secrets of mysticism.

By and large, Kashmiri sufi poetry projects the concept of *oneness* of God or pantheism (wahdatulwajud). Even though in Safai's poetry the focus is on love (divine love)

and much of its charm derives from its description of the beloved's physical appearance (*sarapa nigari*) he essentially believed in pantheism which is obvious in his poetry.

Safai came of a well-to-do family, it derived its income, in part, from the profession of weaving. It is said that Safai himself worked at the weaving looms, but his poetry does not either through symbol or metaphor indicate this fact. Neither does he mention anything in his *Moulavi Nama*.

Safai is credited with having performed a number of miracles. It is said that he was a saint of his day. One of his disciples, Wahab Dar, was eager to see for himself a qutub (mystic). This he demanded several times of his teacher. The teacher would say, "You see him everyday". But, Wahab Dar never understood the meaning of this utterance and continued with his demand. "I wish to see a qutub". At last, his teacher told him to visit the Pampore highlands on a Thursday morning where he would meet the mystic. The pupil went there and saw his own teacher—Safai—who asked him whether he had seen the saint. The disciple still missed the point. The teacher told him that the qutub was one who asked the mound to move and it did move. Saying this, a mound nearby began to move and the disciple got the point. There are similar other miracles attributed to Safai but cannot be recounted here for paucity of space.

The above is a brief sketch of Khazir Malik Safai's life which has been arranged on the basis of here say as well as written evidence. Nearly a century's obscurity shrouding the poet makes it impossible for one to write about all aspects of his life. However, after carefully examining the local traditions and written evidences relating to him I have collected this brief account in the hope that it paves way for further research into his life enabling us to give him his due position in the literary history of Kashmir.

Works

1. Devani Safai

Safai's divan comprises 11 *ghazals*, *vatsuns* and *nazms* that begin with *alif* (the first letter in the Arabic alphabet) and end with *ye* (the last letter in the alphabet). This collection includes some symbolic poems and hymns as well. About the number of songs in the collection, Safai writes :

Yak sad o Ya : z dah yi di : va : ni
ti : chu xatami ji : la : ni :

This anthology has a hundred and eleven parts.
 That is (the number of) recital of jellan¹

ath na kenh ixála : f lekhsa baya : z
az kama : li insa : f lekhsa baya z

There is no controversy write this collection
 Write it with complete justice.

Safi appears to be confident about his poetic talent and also hopeful that in due course of time his collection would reach far and wide. That is why he addresses the scribe of his verse thus :

chukh tsa kañb parun yi daftari isiq
tassra : vun ba u : d mujamar isiq

Thou art the scribe, read this love record,
 Heat up with Ood the fragrance of love.

va : á qa : f ta : qa : f lekhs a baya : z
az kma : lai insa : f lekhsa baya : z

It will reach far and wide write this collection
Write it with complete justice.

thad is a : ra : *tas qani yeth* manz
sa : zos a : marn a : sqan hyund sanz

High hints of love in this are
And everything that lovers need
musk kastur na : f lekhsa baya : z
az kama : li insa : f lekhsa baya : z

Fragrance, Kastoor, musk write this collection
Write it with complete justice.

rozima : sa : *khatuth* yi vuzmal nu : r
nu : ra mehren uru : s his masat : r

Will not remain hidden this dazzling lightning
The bright bride like a treasure hidden.

tegh his *dar ghila* : f lekhsa bayazz
az kama : li insa : f lekhsa baya : z

As a sword in scabard write this collection
write it with complete justice.

2. Baghi Shuhada (Martyr's Garden)

This is a translation of a famous Persian poet, Mulla Hussani's Persian elegy *Rauzat Alshuhada* which contains six thousand lines in the *mathnavi* form. About changing the name from its original to the Kashmiri version, Safai writes :

chum has a ynun as vanun vuzi karbala : av *dosta* : n
intza : b az rauzussuhda : chu rauza bo : sta : n

I've to say of Hussain to rouse karbala, O, friends
A selection from *Rauzus Shuhda*, and Rauza meagy garden

rauza arbi : ma : nei bo : *staan dar fa* : rsi :
ba : gi suhda : na : v *yeth pyav poz ta kasur pa* : rsi

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Bagh is Rauza in Arabic and Bostan in Persian
Baghi Shuhda name it got true that in Kashmiri

Mulla Hussain's *Rauzat Alshuhda* comprises ten chapters whereas Safai's has only five chapters. This curtailing indicates that Safai did not approve of the unnecessary length of the original but tried to direct the readers' focus on the central concern of the work. After giving details of the chapters before the beginning of the first chapter, Safai expresses his deep faith (in Hussain)² in the following words :

nazim na : mi safa : i xosnava : co : n andli : b
chi nava : tra : va : n haza : r ava : z sala : t aji : b

(A poet namely Safai is your sweet voiced nightingale who
sends you a thousand greetings)

and li : bas va : fi kashir pathi ma : nei po : snu : l
panja donvai *tami* ditin *dar da* : mani a : li rasu : l

(A nightingale is 'posnu : l in Kashmiri. The nightingale i.e.
Safai, has held fast on to the Prophet's family.)

dar rika : bain tavakaltu al Allah sud sava:r
ya : iba : d Allah ayu : ni nabi jalvayat ustava:r

(He (Hussain) rode the horse trusting in God. It looks as
though the Prophet were himself riding.)

sahrahasai manz paka : n kar va : ti qasid ka : rva : n
naghmai sala : tava : zi huda ba : sa : rba : n

(Walking on the roads he calls for prayers and guides on the
camel's back.)

sa : qiya : me ja : mi jam ca : vum ba chus tufta jigar
sahra : has chus paka : n moxtai chaka : n be : pa : o sar

(O 'cup-bearer'! make me drink from the cup as my heart is
burnt. I am walking the roads barefoot spreading diamonds to
see the leader of the caravan.)

ja : mi jam ca : vum nazar maklem vuchan bo sa : rba : n
va : sit maqsad karum filha : l ha : vum ka : rva : n

(Make me drink from the cup so that my eyes open up and I would see the camel rider (Hussain). Take me to my destination but for the time being show me the caravan.)

Realising the greatness of this elegy, Safai addresses the readers thus :

yuthna za : nan tim sorudo zi : robum
ya : ki jangi pa : da : hani ajam

(They (the readers) should not take it (the elegy) as music or the wars of Eastern kings.)

ya : fasa : na ya : tara : na ya : ghazal
baliki za : nan kya chu taqdi : ri azal

(Or fiction or song or ghazal, but let them understand what fate is.)

a : yi bo : zan tim su mazmu : n dou : n
ibtida : potha ta : ilaithi ra : jiu : n

(They will hear clearly that inner theme, from beginning to the end.)

When did Safai begin the writing of this elegy, and how long did it take him, nothing can be said with certainty. However, the poet completed it on the morning of Wednesday 22 Zilhija, 1323 H which is mentioned by him at the end of the poem. On this basis Safai must have been 59 at that time, and it could be considered this last literary achievement :

a : fta : ban *trou* partav ga : s a : m
mam kamar o : sum *tathva* : s dra : m

(The sun shone and I got light, I had a bent back which straightened up.)

ca : r samba fajr xatam i : n soxan
az fazli zuljala : l zulyami : n

(On Wednesday morning I finished this elegy. It was only with the Grace of the Almighty.)

o : s zultajun zuto vuhim su doh
sana zuva : hsath ta trovu : him saba :

(It was the 22nd of Zilhija , the year 1300 and the night of 23
Zilhija)⁵

3. *Qasasul Annbia* (Stories of Prophets)

It is a Kashmiri language version of Abdul Wahab-bin-Mohammad's Persian *Qasatul Anbia*. It has 15000 verses. Abdul Wahab's *mathnavi* is in prose whereas Safai, at the request of his friends, rendered it in poetry :

vana : n sa : libi qasatul annbia
su mufti : zama : nuk ba alimohuda :
They say that the writer of *Qasasul Annbia*
Was leader of the time with knowledge and guidance

dapan abdul waha : b tasund na : in neik
muhammad pidar tas ba anja:m neik
They say his name was Abdul Wahab
Mohammad his father reached a good end.

korum do : s tav a : sqav iltima : s
arab fa : rsi : van ba fahmo qiya : s
Requested by friends and lovers
That I should render Arabic Persian in simple language

Marav asi muta : la ta a : sa : n banci
parav a : lamas kyuti ehisa : n baei
We shall read it for our own benefit
and we shall read for world's benefit.

Kashmiri *mathnavi* was thematically deficient in such things and Safai's translation made up this deficiency and thereby enhanced Kashmiri literature.

Qasasul Annobia is a description of the life and achievements of different prophets. It also gives an account of the Throne (aras), Earth and Satan. As a whole, it throws light on the eternal brightness of the last Prophet of Islam. It has twenty chapters. In the last chapter, we are told how this eternal light shone in the

deserts of Arabia and culminated in spreading the everlasting message through the last prophet. About the content of different chapters Safai writes :

The first chapter is about the Prophet's light
 (And) whatever was created from Prophet's light
 The second chapter about the creation of Jinns
 With Satan's mention there in the middle.
 The third chapter is about Adam
 Which is spread over nine sections.
 Chapter number four in the collection
 Is devoted to Idris the Prophet.
 The fifth chapter is about Noah.
 Who suffered a lot in his life.
 The sixth chapter about Hud
 The details are in sections three.
 The seventh chapter about Saleh
 And it has section in the collection.
 The eighth chapter is about Lut
 Is in three sections in the collection.
 In the ninth chapter Khalik's and mention is made
 It has been recorded in section three.
 The tenth chapter on Yaqub and Yusuf
 Briefly discussed in section five.
 In the eleventh listen to Ayub's account
 Listen to his patience in section two.
 The twelfth chapter about Shuaib
 It is in two sections doubt it not.
 In the thirteenth Mose and Aron come
 To Hama, Faroah and Qaroon
 The fourteenth is about Ilyas
 Is mentioned in three sections of the book
 The fifteenth is about Yunus
 Will be related at the appropriate place.
 The sixteenth has come for Daud (David)
 He was to time Creator.
 The seventeenth is Sulaiman's chapter
 (He) has been mentioned in section three.
 The eighteenth is about Zakariya
 About Yahya from beginning to end

The nineteenth is on the life and canons
of Jesus-Mariam in section three.
The twentieth mentions the last of Prophets
Muhammad the king of all creators things
This account is given in five sections
All praises and all salutes to him.

When was this *mathnavi* begun and when did it end,
nothing is known about it. The poet ends up this lengthy
work with the following note :

sana : malikas moxtasar gov qasas
yuthi o : s nasras andar pe : sopas
Thanks to God, the story is finished
It was all written in prose.

Safai karish nasar manzu : m gov
yiman hubi di : n a : si mo : l u : m gov
Safai rendered prose into poetry
(Those) who have love of religion know this.

4. Moulvi Nama (Teacher's Account)

Written in the *mathnavi Moulvi Nama*, is in fact Safai's
gratitude to his spiritual guide, Gul Mohammad Shah.
Here, he details some of his spiritual aspects and miracles.
However, in the beginning Safai talks about his own life
and works. In addition an account of some other spiritual
persons has also been given. On the first page are the
following verses, in the ghazal form, describing the work :

hosi parto : n moulvi ; na : mai
a : Sqaan kyut chu garam hanga : mai
Read with care this Moulvi Nama
For lovers this is a hot talk.

bath zai sa : s da : i sa : s a : mañ
gov yi manzu : m zi : n siyal ja : mai
Songs two thousand half have come
Rendered in poetry in black ink.

la : g sa : hid tsa asal mahbu : has
jalvagar chi valith zari : ja : mai
Be a witness to actual love
Elegant he is in bright dress.

za : hiran vasafi tu : ri maula : na :
gul muhammad buzaraḡ ala : mai
Overtly having Tur's ¹ quality
Gul Mohammad the elderly scholar.

baʿīnan za : nʿan su nu : ri zahu : r
aval a : xir yi dar nazar a : mai
In wordly recognise that light manifest
First and last it I saw.

5. Tota Nama (Parrot's Account)

This is the Kashmiri language version of Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi's Persian work. This long allegorical poem is written in six parts, each part begins with a new line, rhyme and metre. The parrot allegory was used by the Sufi poet Wahab Khar also who wrote it in six parts. However, it is very difficult to say who used it first, because both Safai and Wahab Khar were contemporaries⁵. There is no evidence either available that the two had any contact with each other. However, despite its folk quality and popularity Wahab Khar's allegory, at times, suffers from linguistic faults, rhymes and breaking of metre. On the contrary, Safai's poem illustrates a master artist with a unique style.

Both the poems have different plots. It is a debatable question whether Wahab Khar borrowed this allegory or it was his own creation. However, Safai's allegory is a Kashmiri version of Rumi's *mathnawi*.

Xoja sundui *tota* ya : math gov marith
xoja sandins ba : gasai paulyi gul harith
The moment the rich man's parrot died
Flowers faded in his garden.

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tami dokhan tami chokan anunam hoju : m
yi ; chu farma : va : n maula : nai ru : m
In its wake came sorrows and wounds
This is the saying of Maulana Rumi

mu : dmut totai ditun da : rith nebar
za sara : pe : gov xojaz zero zabar
The dead parrot he threw out
From head to toe the richman was shattered.

a : h ta afsu : s tro : vun kya banyo : m
ti : chu farma : va : n maula : nai ru : m
Ah, Oh, what a tragedy has struck me
This is the saying of Maulana Rumi

ya : m tami totan korui parva : z tund
khot akis langas darxtas marimond
The moment the parrot soared high
Perched he on a tree beautiful.

Catching his beard the richman (said) woe me!
This is the saying of Maulana Rumi.

6. **Habtal Almateen**

This comprises about 700 poetic lines in the *mathnavi* form. They include hymns and eulogies also, though in Kashmiri, strong Persian influences are discernible.

7. **Jangi Ajam (Battle of East)**

It is said that this *mathnavi* was written in two manuscript forms but neither has been traced so far. However, a few leaves of a manuscript, including the foreword, have been found which indicate that *Jangi Ajam* was Safai's literary creation which he arranged in three detailed chapters. The available foreword contains this Persian expression about the poem's chapter :

The first part is about kings of East from Kyumaras to Yazadgarad. The second is about Maushirwan and Parvez. The third is about Ummayia and Abasiya tribes and Safai tribe. Briefly appear the Jughais in the Kashmiri poem.

8. Sikandar Nama (Sikandar's Account)

This is the Kashmiri version of a Persian poet, Nizami's *Sikandar Nama*. Although many people have seen and also read this poem, it remains untraced till date. Some of the elderly persons of his village remember some of its lines :

Living life of thirty or three hundred
This world is ultimately an illusion.

Sikander the greatest of monarchs had
finally to die. When it is so, who will last forever ?

9. Shah Nama

This is the Kashmiri language version of Firdaus's *Shahnama*. This too remains untraced like other *mathnavis*, though many people have seen and read it. They say that it was a complete translation of the Persian *Shahnama*, and the portion where Rustam weeps bitterly after killing his son Sohrab, is marvellous. It was during this time that Safai lost his eldest son, Khalil Malik, and through Rustam, he mourns his death. The poetic form heightens the intensity of this event. Some orally heard lines of this poem are :

su sohra : b dar umar bah sa : l o : s
niva : n markas harnaiey tsha : l o : s
That Sohrab of twelve years was
Would make deer's leaps over the world

babas nis ba a : ya : s mula : qata sai
ditam ja:n yath jangi ba : za : ra sai
My father had I come to meet
Gave I my life in this battle.

dopus rustuman mali sund na : v kya
kitic mo : j chai sahar taim ga : m kva
Saith Rastum tell me your father's name
Where from was your mother, what city or village?

10. Anthology of Eulogies and Hymns

Khazir Malik Safai himself edited an anthology which has not been traced so far. However a copy of it was edited by his son Ghulam Mehdi after Safai's death. How did Safai edit the anthology, and under what title, nothing is known about this because the first few pages of the volume are lost. The anthology contains many of Safai's hymns and eulogies which people still recite in local mosques.

mad abro chu su:rai nu:nas
misli tarva:r ya:rasul Allah

tha:v bar sar ana:ma ko:far
ha:v dastar:ya:rasul Allah

si : na bakin:na chui alamnashah
zan saman za:r ya:rasul:l Allah.

(Here the poet is eulogising Allah's apostle, Muhammad, in different ways. Any rendering of it into English will not convey the same feelings. Such verses have been only given in phonetic transcription—translator).

It has already been mentioned that much of Safai's literary works have not been traced. It is very difficult to say how many of them were destroyed. However, the works which Safai mentions in his *Moulvi Nama* — *Keomiya Manzoom*, *Wafati Rasul*, *Me'raj Nama* and *Urvatul Vusgga* — are still untraced and efforts are on to trace them :

Earlier on I wrote a lot
Giving a description of God's people in poetry.

Five or seven thousand lines of *Rauzatu Alshunda*
A poem in Kashmiri wrote I.

A thousand and a half lines wrote I
giving details of *Urvatul Vusga*

Details of Me'raj did I give elaborately
Another collection is on the Prophet's death.

From Jerij did I extract
on the Prophet's death and Me'raj.

Eight or seven thousand lines wrote I biographical
Description of Sheikhs was a big collection.

Siddique's time and Farooque's period
Elegantly appear like the sun and moon.

Many a song on their description
A lot of time was spent on that.

It is clear that Safai devoted his whole life to Kashmiri language and added new dimensions to our literature. He did not try his hand in Kashmiri only but also in Persian and Arabic. The available Persian works include *Qaseeda Gausia*, *Reshi Nama*, *Nazmi Ajeeb* and some ghazals, hymns and eulogies. It is possible that some works might have been destroyed and some of them remain untraced.

Some people say that had translated with explanations the holy Quran, but it has not been traced despite great efforts. Neither does Safai give any indication about it in his poems. Some of the things that Safai used are still with his heirs. Among the preserved things is the seal made of silver, on which is written :

Notes

1. Jelami is Abdul Quair, a Muslim saint. A particular way of worshipping is attributed to him (Tr.) "Xatami" is a special way of reciting that his followers jointly undertake on special occasions. In Kashmir, such recitals take place for 13 days at his shrine in Khanyar (Tr.)
2. Hussain was the grandson of Prophet Muhammad who was killed at Karbala in Iraq (Tr.)
3. There appears a contradiction about the dates in Safai and the writer of the monograph. Safai says that it was 22nd day 1300 H that he finished the poem. The author of the monograph says that it was 1323 H (Tr.)
4. "Tur" is Mount Sinai in Jerusalem on which Moses talked to God.
5. Wahab Khar (1842-1912) and Safai (1846-1921).

Poetry

Safai was a multifaceted poet of the Kashmiri language who used different forms of poetry — elegy, *mathnavi*, *ghazal*, *vatsan*, *nazam*, hymns and eulogies. His creative writings made a new and important addition to our literature. Unless Safai's place in Kashmiri literature, especially Kashmiri poetry, is recognised, it will be very difficult for a student of Kashmiri literature to have any authentic or final view of many Kashmiri poets. His poetic field is vast and keeping in view the quality and quantity of his poetry it is not possible to have a thorough discussion or critical appreciation of his poetry. However, a survey of his poetic forms and their brief analysis should enable us to pave the way for further research and criticism in understanding his status as a poet.

Although elegies were written in Kashmiri along with other forms of poetry, they did not achieve any popularity like *wakh*, *shruk*, *ghazal* and *vatsun*. It is because Kashmiri did not produce any great elegy writer who would make it popular with the people. Shahid Badgami's following statement is emotionally exaggerate :

In popularity, Kashmiri elegy is on top of other forms. Kashmiri elegy began with Lala's *wakhs*. Even these remained unpopular in comparison to elegy.

History of Kashmiri Elegy

It is a fact that on studying the literacy history of Kashmir we find few elegies. A few poets who tried their hand in

this form could not earn fame as full-fledged elegy writers. However, as Safai's collection of poetry have become available, researchers will have to rethink on the already available literature and give Safai his due place in our literary history. The way Safai enriched this form can hardly be competed by any other poet.

Elegy writing is an art which follows its non-specific rules. To begin with, whatever incident or event the poet presents, must be vividly described as if the reader was himself passing through those experiences and situations while reading. This is a quality where Safai excels. During the reading of his elegies the reader does not at all feel that he is away from Karbala but feels himself to be a part of the destruction caused at Karbala. A vivid and complete description of the events and incidents bring out some delicate psychological characteristics clearly.

As far as characterisation is concerned, in dramas, short stories, novels, etc., characters are presented the way their creator wants them to be to suit his theme and temperament. In historical accounts the freedom of the writer is curtailed and, especially when he describes events like Karbala which are religious, historical and relating to faith, characterisation has a fixed norm. The writer cannot take flights in his imagination and his creativity is under a restraint. For example, Husain's character has one dimension and Yazid's character has quite the opposite. The writer cannot change this. Safai, however, makes full use of his imagination without changing the characters or events and, thus, manifests his poetic and creative art : For example take Husain's character. There are two aspects—elegance and power—to his character. When Safai shows his power or valour, the language and expression show him a brave and enthusiastic character.

nali misruk parci lajin quba
gond amama jada sund tami marhaba :

(He (Husain) dressed himself in Egyptian fabric and wore the turban of his grandfather)

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me:r hamzun gond sipar tami dar qaza
 zulfiqa : r mutaza paran safa
 (He fastened Hamza's shield and Murtaza's [i.e. his father's]
 sword).

gov sava:r sui ba asp zuljinah
 dar:v sa:he : karbala : part/h silah
 (He rode zuljinah (horse) and went (to the field) fully armed)
 as gauhar dar:r samsi:ra : durang

na : r a : bas a : b Na : ras hu barang
 (His sword had jewels on it and was double edged)

se : r sanz sakal tundi cu fi : l
 hin diva : n koh zan vaza : n ya ru : d ni : l
 (He was like a lion and brave like an elephant. With his bravery
 the mountain and the river trembled)

gur tulun gov te : g cun sur sur vaza : n
 bagiya : n dar larzah cun bargi raza : n
 (He took the horse and the sword made a hissing sound. The
 traitors trembled like scattered leaves)

Note : This elegy is appearing in the 'selection' below.
 the rest of it will be given there.

The elegance of his character is brought out when
 Husain encourages the members of his family before
 going to the battlefield :

voni kamar gandith kariv marda : na ho : s
 ga : ma tsatnina karizina ba : roxaro : s
 Now, stand and be courageous like men
 Tear not your clothes, nor weep nor cry,

zain a : bidi : n pas rotun andar Kina : r
 bo : sa karinas bo : z sa : ai dilqara : r
 Thus, he embraced Zain Abidin
 Kissed him and said, 'Listen, my heart's solace'

nu : r didah mya : nu sahibza : da bo : z
 jumla mastu : ra : t heth a : ma : da ro : z

My eyes' light, my son listen
Be prepared with all womenfolk

dar madinai vanizi myanen dostan
chav sala : ma dosdaro alvida :
At Madina tell my friends
my salutes and adieu to my friends

yas zuvas peth saxti : arizi dya : n
zuv ditukh Ja : n sipa : ro alvida :
Think of the one who suffered
And gave his life, o faithful, adieu !

Note : the rest of the poem can be found in the 'selection' below.

An important feature of such characterisation is that the character must be presented so that the reader's hard-hearted character must not be shown absolutely devoid of any human values or else he ceases to be human. Ibni Ziyad orders the arrest of Imam Muslim's two innocent and orphaned sons through Harith. Harith instead brings the heads of these two boys to Ziyad. Seeing the innocent faces and the tender hair, even the cruel Ziyad bursts into tears. Safai depicts this aspect of his character in the following way :

Sar laḍin dar ty : brah tḥavin bazi : n ,
gov ḍava : n ibni ziya : ḍa nis lain
(Putting the heads in a bag on the horse, he (Harith) went to
Ibni Ziyad)

tami ḍapus yi kahind dar tu : brah
dopna cya : nen ḍusmanan hindi sarai
(He [Ziyad] asked him whose heads they were. He told him
[they were] of his enemies)

tami dopukh yim sar kahind ay na . zinav
dopukh faizandani muslim bazirav
(He asked the audience, whose heads they were. They replied
they were of Muslim's sons)

hakimas pokh as setha be : a exāya : ²

hazirav kar gariyai vodukh za : r za : r

(Tears rolled down the ruler's eyes. The audience wept bitterly).

hakiman dopus lai : na kya koruth

kenh boruth na : xu : ni haq ku prah govni

(The ruler reprimanded him for shedding the blood of the innocent)

ro : i dil a : ve : z di : sith kya koruth

mo : i anmber paez di : sith kya zoruth

(Seeing their fascinating faces, how did you kill them and seeing their tender locks how did you kill them?)

The poet presents an incident, a thought or an experience in such a way that the readers take it for a real one. Even if the event were of old times, the poet renders it in such a way that the reader feels that it is happening now. This is only possible when the characters and events get a realistic colour. That is an important difference between historical facts and facts in poetry. As a painter presents a complete picture with the help of different colour, so does a poet make use of words, metaphors, phrases and similies to present a vivid description of the event. Both are artists : the one works with colours and the other with words. Safai uses words with graphic vividness. (Note : I shall be giving only phonetic transcription so that the readers themselves understand how Safai uses the language in his poetry. This seems the primary aim of the author here) :

ū : r az zulfuf siya : has gai xa jil lailudujja

ma : h rausan xair az roes xajil samasuzuha :

sa : h hasan az ru : ri roxe rausan chu az ru : ri qama

Sa : he hasan az anmbia auliya : nurul basar

Sa : h hasan a : mutx nomu : na chui sodahim ma : h badr

chi za ge : so : i hasan nomu : na lailul qadr

sa : h hasan chui ma : hi ta : oa : ni a:sma:ni ba:kama : l

sa : h hasan chui alif qad sar dabista : ni jama : l

Or

Sar brahana subuh az carixi kabu : d
 gov su su : rid tsatith paradah namu : d
 dasanaiey dauri zama:n ge : so . i sab
 tsatan dar ma : tam tsotun na : kenh ajab
 ja : ma a : n as ama : mukli san niga r
 para pa : rai su d zi dasu ro ; zga : r

Or

ta . rkan hind pa : dsa : nan mor ghau : b
 gov siya : h a : lam surna : lo ta : janu : b
 gai siyahi : pada andar A: lamas
 sab siya : h ja : mai valith manz ma : tmas
 arzaey ro : i zami : n gardi guba : r
 ro : i sar gomut zi zulmat tas siya : li
 zu : ni zulmat ro : i tas gomut tabah

Safai's description of emotions makes the reader emotionally disturbed. It cannot be denied that the Karbala incident is in itself charged with emotions. What can a poet do in such conditions that his individuality remains intact and his poetry evokes emotions in such a way that the actual life appears less ebullient. Here too, Safai's creative talent emerges as unique in that the reader gets emotionally involved in the events in the same way as actual characters who are participants in the events. The reader feels that he himself sees the cruelty being inflicted and he himself appears to be burning under the scorching heat of the desert. When Imam Husain feels physically weak and gets off his horse, Shumur gets the opportunity and kills him while he is at prayer. Just before the killings, the two enter into a dialogue which Safai expresses in the following words (only a few examples are given. The rest will be found in the 'selection') :

zo : r sumran kor ba a : n sadri safa
 te : g heth bar qatal gov a : n pur jafa :

(Shumur exercised all his force on Husain's chest and was ready to kill him with the sword)

38 *Khazir Malik Safai*

sayidan von poz chu vonmut hazratān

Majlisan bavinās daru : da xalvatan

(Husain said that the Prophet spoke the truth. Praise be to him)

qatilas yim yim nisa : nai tam vanim

tsai andar me tam vachim bai praznim

(Whatever signs of the killer he had told me, I find and recognise them all in you.)

* * *

sajidasai andar ditas tami zarab a : h

az saha : dath co : v tami sarbat su sa : h

(While he was in prostration, he stabbed him and martyred him.)

Emotions burst when after Husain's death, his horse arrives at the tent of his family, tears rolling down its eyes. Safai gives this unnatural event a poetic touch and introduces it in the following words :

ba'd qatli a : sehansa : h ziman

gur tyundui har taraf la : ra : n yiman

(After the killing of Husain, his horse paced around)

os hara : n casnav ta gov xamas nisey

ahli batau vuch dadi a : usey

(Weeping bitterly it went to the tent. The family saw it and felt miserable)

dopukh taskunui kya govui ay zuljnah

sahsava : ras kya koruth vansa : sila : h

(They asked the horse what had happened to its rider)

youra nyu : than tora ko : no onuth you : r

duśmanan manz kati tro : vuth nyu : th ko : r

(You took him from here why didn't you bring him back? Why did you leave him among the foes? Where did you take him?)

kyazi ronguth mo : l pe : ssa : ni:baxu : n
 xa : ka ro : yas kya : zi chui ay pur janu : n

(Why have you coloured your face with blood. Why have you
 dusted your face, you mad ?)

ahli batav hui tulukh so : ro sar
 ja : n korun tasli : m ba : ja : n a fri : n

(The family started crying and weeping. He had accepted
 death).

After reading Safai's elegy, there remains no room for exaggeration and unnaturalness of the events in reader's minds. This creative power of the poet makes the historian take the reader along and become knowledgeable. The famous elegy writer of Urdu, Mir Anees, shows the River Furat and its waves weep, and the sun turns red at the death of Husain. Although, it is unnatural and unthinkable, the poet suspends the reader's disbelief with the help of his creative power :

tha bas ki rozi qatal sa : hi a : sma : n jina : b
 nikla : tha : xu : n maley huxay cehray pa afta : b

(On the day of Husain's death, the sun showed its face covered
 with blood)

thi : nahar a'lqama xaja : lat sey a : n a : b
 ro : ta tha : phu : t ph : t kar darya : mein har huba : b

(River Alqama was all ashamed. Every wave in it was weeping
 bitterly).

Khazir Malik Safai manifests a similar approach in his elegies. He makes us feel the sorrow of the River Furat and the fish in it, the sky's hiding its face behind the clouds, the moon's burning its face in dejection and the sun's light turning yellow at the death of Husain :

a : smanan dyut ama : ma bar zami : n
 zu : ni buth zul byai sitaro alvida :

(The sky threw the turban on the earth [the turban is a sign of respect and in mourning its throwing down indicates the intensity of the grief]. The moon scratched their face and stars
 Adieu!)

a : fta : a bukh nu : r dar zardi sapun
rang xu : nuk rot kina : rav alvide :

(The sun's light turned yellow. Its sides took the colour of
blood Adieu!)

Note : The rest of the poem can be reproduced in the
'selection'.

In *BaghiShuhada*, the events and happenings have been related with full experience and imagination. The elegy is not just a verbal expression but contains poetic rhythms. It will not be an exaggeration if we call Safai the Mir Anees of Kashmiri literature.

The *mathnavi* has been a popular poetic form in Kashmiri. Most of the poems in this form have been translations of Persian *mathnavis* which began with Mehmud Gami's translation of *Shireen Xusro* into Kashmiri. Since then, many *mathnavis* have been written in Kashmiri which include love *mathnavis* in large numbers and some war accounts and some with religious themes. Safai is in the forefront in this field. The themes of his *mathnavis* are historical legendary, religious, and one does not find many love *mathnavis*. But, looking at the literary heritage of this genius, one feels that his lost works would have contained some love *mathnavis* also, because they were much in vogue in his time. It is a fact that Safai consciously chose historical, legendary and religious *mathnavis* and rendered them in Kashmiri, to which our poets had paid very little attention.

All his *mathnavis* are translations of Persian *mathnavis*. On reading these, it becomes clear that he does not slavishly follow the idiom of the original writer, but retains the themes to suit his own creativity. Sometimes, he is brief and at times, he prolongs the description. This creative freedom gives his *mathnavis* a local colour, despite their being alien in incidents, environment and characters. It widens his creative potential and the reader feels more and more eager to read on.

The story of Yusuf Zulekha which is mentioned in the Quran also is very popular. Safai renders it in Kashmiri. Yusuf's step brothers feel jealous of him and decide to throw him into a well. In order to take him along, they go to their father, Yaqub (Jacob), and deceive him by talking about meadows, orchards, water-falls, etc., to which they would take Yusuf. Safai gives it a local colour and says :

ha : ba : ba sabo chu kam navbaha : r
pholan dar biya : ba : n vazan a : bsar : r
O father, what a spring there is !
The deserts bloom and the falls sound.

gulav soninbalav tati chu kodnut kalah
chi qumir ta kostur dar ghalghalah
Flowers have come out
Doves and Kasturs are singing

dopukh tam me ge : so tasind sabzaa : r
su roksa : ri yu : suf me thod navbahar : r
He said : Yusuf's locks my meadow are
His cheeks my great spring are.

ba bulbul su gul yi kath va : ra za : n
juda : i tasaz cham baha : ras xsza : n
I am a bulbul and he the follower, know it well,
His absence is winter to my spring.

banya : ti : baha : ras karun roxsathia : h
ratun na : ri hijra : n tulin zahma/ha : h
How can I allow the spring to go
Accept his departing and suffer the pain ?

— Qasa Yusuf

Safai's scenes are beautiful, charming and realistic. His description of emotions intensifies the effect of the happening which engulfs the reader and develops his curiosity. The use of his words, phrases, similes and metaphors is apt, unhampered, appropriate and to the point. The tragic situation boils up emotions and the

prophetic qualities bring characters near to real human feelings and tenderness.

Prophet Ibrahim is commanded by God to sacrifice his dear son, Ismael. To fulfil this command, the father takes his son to the altar. Before the knife reaches his throat, Ismael, feeling the love for his mother, sends a heart-rending message to her through the father. Safai renders it thus :

dizes myo : n sui ja : mai rangda : r

nusa : nai tamis rozi yus ya . dga : r

(Give her my coloured dress so that she keeps it as a token of remembrance).

tsa dapzes vucha : n a : si gul navbaha : r

rata : n a : si sui ro : i ze : ba : niga : r

(You tell her to see the first bom flower every spring. That would remind her of the face of her charming son.)

bunafas vucha : n a : si ya : sonmbalan

rata : n a : si soi ge : so : i koklan

(Whether she sees a violet or a hyacinth [that would mean] she would be catching the curly hair [of me]).

ba ba : da : m nargis vucha : n az suma : r

vucha : n a : si zai casma cham somnada : r

(If she sees an almond or a narcissus intoxicated, she would be seeing my two eyes with antimony).

yele : jalvagar sapri vuzmalan

dapa : n a : si rox hovnam ha : ntslan

(When the lightning would strike she would know that it was the face of her son).

ba mehra : b musta : q beha : na : si ta : q

buman don vachith a : si tra : va : n fira : q

Such translated events which are religious and historical in nature hampered Safai's freedom as a creative artist. He nonetheless, brings the characters in them near to real

life where they are introduced to natural impulses. His characters appear to be the characters of a dramatist who act on the stage. The dialogues too are dramatic which manifest Safai's command over the language, and his creative power. For example, Adam and Eve feel disappointed after eating the Forbidden Fruit. Safai relates the situation in the following manner :

su a : dam ta hava : za urya : n tan

xa ja : lat gayakh galizi asi kya : vachan

(Adam and Eve, the two naked bodies, were ashamed on their nakedness).

dopun sa : xsai tra : vtam sa : yalai

yiyein dri : nth yokun ta to : kun tsalai

(Adam told the branch (of the tree) to leave him. He would find a hiding place for himself).

dopus sa : xnai chum me hukmi xuda

karun basta tsai ti : yiva : n chum nida

(The branch told him that it was God's command to cover him. That was the order received).

ba tra : vath agar pas siya : h kar chus

tsa tra : vath ta tsai hyu : gona : hga : r chus

(If he left him he would be a doer of evil deeds, if he left him he would be a sinner like him).

yi bu : zith tsolus zora ni : rith fugha : n

dopun ba : ha : alama : n alama : n

(Hearing this, Adam sighed heavily and said Mercy, Mercy).

me bu : zum tsa chuk archamra : himin : n

Kara : n ko : na chukh rsham bar dilhazi : n

(Said, I have heard that you (God) are the most Merciful. Why don't you show mercy to the sad-hearted?).

tsa chukh dil sikastan navazis kara : n

tsa chukh be : kasan sazis karan

(You bestow blessings on the heart-broken. You help the needy).

daraxtas kunui a : dman onna ro .
goishum satri arurat korun a : rzo .

(Adam did not turn his face to the tree. He wished to cover himself).

kulyav sa : rvai sarkasi kari tuthui
ditukh na : tamis barag satras kutui

(All the trees shed their leaves to cover Adam).

Safai is not been able to escape from Persian influences in his *mathnavis*. It is because Persian was, in his time, in vogue and Kashmiri had just begun to become a literary language. Also, at times, the poets deliberately used foreign words to heighten the aesthetics of their poetry. It is clear that the use of Persian words made a valuable addition to Kashmiri vocabulary. Safai, too, used Persian words in accordance with his themes. However, he uses purely Kashmiri words also. As a matter of fact, his delicate topics demanded a clever use of language, and he is successful in that. His religious, historical, legendary and other kinds of *mathnavis* are qualitatively and quantitatively a valued addition to Kashmiri literature.

The foregoing discussion was about elegy and *mathnavi* themes which Safai borrowed from Persian. We shall turn now to those poetic forms which are an expression of his imaginative creation. Their themes are based on his own experiences and feelings. They include eulogy, *vatsan*, *ghazal* and *nazam*.

A eulogy³ a poem whose main feature lies in its novel and grand theme—i.e., the life, splendour and elegance of Prophet Muhamad. Safai's eulogies and hymns sometimes speak of the Prophet's splendour and sometimes his grandeur. His eulogies are full of spiritual and mystic meanings which readers decode slowly and gradually. Some of his eulogies talk of the Prophet's physical features. The artist makes a myriad use of words to delineate the face of the Prophet.

It goes to Safai's credit that he, while eulogising the Prophet and paying him his homage, refers to the Quran to depict his prophetic status and position, likening his different organs to the different verses of the Quran. Here we notice another aspect of Safai's personality : he was not a *hafiz* of the Quran but also understood its subtleties.

(Note: The lines quoted here by the author can be found in the Selection below. To avoid repetition, they have not been given here (Tr.).

Safai depicts the image by placing it in an appropriate environment. Sometimes, he mentions the Prophet's associates, their qualities, and, at times, he talks about the Prophet's friends, wives, and following, to bring out his elegant personality. Thus, Safai brings the centre into sharp focus by highlighting the environment. That is, he either directly or indirectly throws light on the Prophet's friends, wives, associates and followers only to highlight the magnificent personality of the Prophet.

(Note : The text of the eulogies quoted here can be found in the selection below —Tr).

Kashmiri eulogy literature is rich and variable. From Fakhir till date, this form has progressed steadily and has made the literature richer. However, among the many eulogists who emerged, only Abdul Ahad Nadin could maintain his individuality.

A eulogium has a fixed theme, but, structurally it is free. In Kashmiri, too, the form has been used variously. The flexibility of the form makes provision for free-verse and poetic prose also. Safai's eulogium are in varied forms, *ghazal* and *vatsan* forms especially. Like Persian, Kashmiri eulogiums too have two important aspects : the Prophet's splendour and grandeur, and his miracles. We can compare Persian eulogy writers like Xaqani and Jami with Safai and Nadim. Xaqani's eulogiums are marked by his power of expression and density of meaning. This is

true of Safai's eulogies also. Safai speaks of the Prophet's miracles in such a way that one is reminded of Xaqani. As a skilled writers, Safai thoroughly describes the multi-dimensional personlity of the prophet which, indirectly, shows the charming and powerful use of the Kashmiri language.

Note : See 'Selection' for the poetic lines that the author quotes here —Tr.

Safai's use of language is noteworthy. In his eulogiums, he has not only retained the original meaning of the words but also expanded their semantic areas reaching the deeper levels through the ostensible, and enabling the readers to recognise that deeper level in art. From abstractionis, he gets solid ideas. Safai appears a skilled writer in this too.

Safai's use of words is structurally commendable. The way he organises the words enhance the loftiness of the theme and shines its beauty, that greatness and beauty which are appropriate to eulogy form. In devotional literature words have to be used with great care. They must be appropriate and full of meaning :

tha : v barasar amanai ko : fu : r

ha : v dastar ya : rasu : l Allah

(O, Allah's messenger! keep chapor turban on your head and show it to us).

Note: The rest of the hymn is reproduced in 'Selection' (Tr).

Prophet Muhammad is a source of light for all. God Himself calls him 'merciful for the world'. He was a multifaced person that scholars, philosophers, statesmen of different nations have written much about him. No other prophet or person has been described so copiously.

Recognising his inability to praise him, Safai write :

People have no power to praise thee
Say I the Creator praising thee.

God's Book is full of praise for thee
Saw I Quran all in all praise for thee

Note : The Kashmiri text will be found in 'Selection' (Tr). Realising the greatness of this splendid personality, Iqbal conveys the followings :

kix : muhammad se L vafa : to ham te : rei hein
yeh jaha : n ci : z hai lauhqalam teirei hein

(If you are faithful to Muhammad, God will be yours. Not only this world, even the tablet and pen (or Divine Decrees) will be yours)

Khazir Malik's hymns are a valuable contribution to Kashmiri encomium literature. We will have to admit that he occupies a unique position among the encomium writers.

This uniqueness can be discerned in Safai's eulogies on different Muslim sufis and saints (see 'Selection' for his eulogies of Abu Haniefah Baba Reshi of Islamabad and Mojunuddin Chishu. To avoid repetition, they are left out here —Tr.).

Khazir Malik Safai was an important Sufi poet of the third period (Moomin to Ahad Zargar) of the development of Kashmiri poetry, who not only preserves his traditions, but also makes Islamic Sufism the focal point in his poetry. These were the times when Kashmiri poetry was thematically overwhelmed by Islamic Sufism, and, in form *vatsan* was a popular form. It won't be out of place, nor an exaggeration, to mention that Kashmiri Sufi poets called every song a *ghazal*, though they lacked any knowledge of themes and form of *ghazal*. Only Waza Mehmud was successful in using the classical Persian form of *ghazal* in Kashmiri, to which we did not pay any considerable attention. Waza Mehmud's following claim is not mere

words but is based on fact :

ra : a ho : nzas faz kya chu *tai*

va : za mahmud : d kya chu ghazal xa : n so : n

(The bulbul has a Divine bounty [that it sings so sweets. In the same way]. Waza Mehmud is our best ghazal singer).

In this period of Sufi poetry, *vatsan* developed more, though the poets paid attention to *nazem* also and some classic Sufi *nazems* were written. On the whole, the Sufi poetry of this period is an expression of spiritual experiments, secrets and mysteries whose integral part is 'love'. This love is not the departing or meeting of two persons but the eternal and everlasting meeting of mankind. This love is not earthly but lies the beyond which culminates in the meeting of the part with the whole. On the whole, this love gives the Kashmiri Sufi poetry a lasting charm by providing a lyrical pattern and temperament.

Safai belonged to the group of Sufi poets who maintained the current traditions. He wrote *vatsan* and *nazem* but experimented with *ghazal* also. He had a thorough knowledge of his literary traditions from which he benefitted. In his poetry, his treatment of beauty and love is like that of Mehmud Gami and Rasul Mir. On the one hand, there is Shams Faqir's elegance and, on the other, Rahman Dar's aesthetics. Well versed in Persian poetry, he mastered the essentials of poetry. Faults in prosody and use of defective rhythms and rhymes mar the poetry of some Sufi poets. But Safai shows sensitivity about such things. These Sufi poets were mostly illiterate and very often lost in their own spiritual experiments. They did not give due importance to poetry as such but made the poetic form a vehicle for expressing their feelings. That is why, their poetry becomes just an expression. This is the main reason for their faulty prosody, in their poetry. Safai appears as a notable poet in this respect. He makes the best use of his talent while making his poetic experiments.

The basic source of poetry is language and a good use of language is the identification of poet's talent. The poet does not use any revealed language. He uses the common idiom but takes it away from its dictionary meaning to the newer ones. Words and phrases are put to new metaphorical use. That is why the use of language is considered important in poetry. The words should be appropriate and meaningful. An appropriate and meaningful use of words not only makes the reader understand the poetry, but also involves him emotionally and psychologically.

If we study art through its form two important states wake up in us : One, of words and, two, of meaning. Although the two have separate existence, they are one in effect. That is to say, a word cannot stand without its meaning and no meaning is possible without words. If both are used appropriately, poetry comes into existence and the artists talent develops.

In his poetry, Safai emerges as a store-house of words and, at times, a magician of words. It cannot be deemed that he uses Persian and Arabic words and phrases but we have to see whether this enhances or decreases the beauty of his poetry. There is no harm in using words from other languages or in changing the form of the words for aesthetic purposes. Safai's use of Arabic and Persian words not only increases the intensity of the experience but also makes a valuable contribution to Kashmiri vocabulary. The way he uses his diction makes us admit his mastery in language.

(The poetic lines can be found in the 'Selection'. The following lines are quoted as an example—Tr.).

Alas ! He has taken away inner rest,
His almond eyes have the drowsiness of wine.

To the drunk and with dosy eyes, knock at his door.
To the new spring in lightning, knock at his door.

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dapy a : mas ro : z sa : nei
ke *than* don bo : z ma : nei

(I told him to stay with us listen to the meaning of the talk)

dopun kus ma : ni za : nei
su *thod* isra : r latiei

(He said, who would know the meaning? It is a secret.)

gomut cha : ru : m ya : ci : n
nyumut chun *di* : n ai : n

(Has he gone to China or Rome? He has taken my rest.)

pyamit *ufta* : *da* miski : n
karu axba : r latiei

(The poor have fallen to ground. Give him the new, friend.)

* * *

Asqani dafa : *ur* tai nika : t
rathsa *al/han* manz doh *ta* ra : th

(Love's account and points. Keep in hand day and night.)

tshan truk dith ba : qai varaq
pre *th* ka : ri *thod* chui ka : ri haq

(Study the rest of leaves for the highest work is that of Truth.)

Safai's love, despite being unearthly and his beloved despite being supernatural, delude the reader with worldly love and beauty. Such a desposition becomes a good vehicle for the expression of his learning (*irfan*) also its beauty and style. The poet, thus, relates his beloved's multidimensional traits love's fascinating moments and lover's anguish in exquisite words. At such places, Safai's use of language is charming, elaborative and apt :

hatsi lomnam matsi nindrei
rats andrei lo :

(Catching me by the wrist he pulled me in deep sleep during the night.)

za : i lila : h bo : z sondri :
kaj ma kar abro :

(For God's sake hear my wails. Don't knit your brow.)

guma hats chai burma tsandri :
rats andri : lo :

(Moist with perspiration are your eye-brows during the night.)

phola vani chakh po : sa gondri :
rox ta sonmbul mo :

(Your are fresh bouquet. (Your have) charming cheeks and
hyacinth locks.)

gah be : da : r gah nindri :
rats andri : lo :

(Your are sometimes awake and sometimes asleep, during the
night.)

ma : h roxxa : ras *thod* tul tharyei
siri : na pata gov mot farha : d

(Lift the veil from the charming face. Farhad was mad after
Shireen.)

daka dyun ajzan peth sitangariyei
volai sa : h pariye : chakh pari : za : d

(Pushing the weak is cruelty to them. Come fairy queen fairy
you are born of a fairy)

(Another poem quoted here has been given in Chapter²²
above—Tr).

In every literary achievement, words and their form become a source of experiment and an artistic use of both makes the experiment authentic. Safai's verbal articulation comes only after he has grasped the niceties of the theme and form. His diction has two sides : one, words and phrases he has inherited from his predecessors which he moulds to suit his own thoughts, and, second his coinage of new words according to his theme and idea. The use of such phrases, similes and metaphors is quite novel in Kashmiri. At such occasions, Safai present an altogether different pictures of his beloved. Likening the beloved's cheeks with a rose, or sun, her lips with rose petals, her eyes with sugar and wine and eyes with the gazelle etc., is

all traditional. Contrary to these, Safai uses new and meaningful similes to present a unique picture of his beloved.

(Note : Here the author quotes some poetic lines which are actually a description of the face, eyes, eye-lashes/ brows etc., of Prophet Muhammad. The text is transcribed phonetically in the 'Selection' below—Tr.).

And, at times, Safai's description of his beloved reminds us of Rasul Mir, who is outstanding in this regard. It cannot be denied that Rasul Mir is, as Professor Rehman Rahi Says, the leader of descriptive writers. However, Safai does not lag behind. After Rasul Mir he remains unrivalled. There was a gap of almost half a century between Rasul Mir and Safai.

It cannot be denied that Safai benefitted from Rasul Mir in the art of description of physique. At times, his *vatsan* (and *ghazal* also) treats in its entirety of the motif of his beloved, physical description.

ta : li ta : qi : n chui zaryei
tal chui sonmbul moi

(On your head you have a golden cap and below it are tresses of hair like hyacinth.)

gul chi phalmat ja : farci
hu : ra parye : lo :

(The flowers have blossomed, o, charming fairy.)

(Note : The rest of the poetic lines quoted here can be found in the 'Selections'.)

Like *ghazal*, *vatsan* must have rhyme and metre because it is a lyrical composition whose beauty lies in its musical quality. However, Kashmiri Sufi poetry repeated some rhymes so frequently that it could not come out of "baliyei", "vasiyei" "latyei" "sondaryei", "lo : lo :" and "ya" : ro :". Although they were ostensible metaphorical terms used to refer to a beloved or lover, their repetition had

become a meaningless exercise for the readers. Safai felt this and he hardly makes use of these clichés in his poetry. Instead, he uses weighty and meaningful rhymes and rhythms. For example, "vara:q", "ba :gh.", "sa : ba : s", "tari : q", "afghan".

"sabaq", "ba:th", "malang", "muba:rak", "rafi:q", "pari:za:d", "ahad", "subha:n Allah", "bism Allah", "ra:s", "tavi:z", "thuk thuk", "ghari:b", "xara:b", "xat", "bayaz:z", "diva:n", "alghiya:th", "zi:robun", "Saru:d", "sama:ll", "alim", "ha:fiz", "exla:s", "ai:na xa:na", "manasbal", "Musa:fi:r" and "ze:ba:niga:r" are some of the rhymes that Safai use:

a *durigha*: chum niva:n andy:n qara:r
casmi ba:da:man sara.buk xuma:r

Casmi mas'tis pur xuma:ras thuk thuk
manz baha:ras zeith ha:ras thuk thuk

* * *

pholan hi: tai pholan masval
gule raiha:na Yemborzal
(“Hi:” and “masval” flowers will blossom. So will Basil and daffodils.)

ila' bagas pholan pampo:s
garaz chum ya:ra sund a:gho:s
(The lotus will blossom in the garden (but) I am concerned with the lap of my friend.)

* * *

qasa xa:nan qasa gu:na : gu:n
nokta *da:nan* nika:t bu:qalnu:n
(The story-teller has varied stories and critics have different points.)

alimo axba:r vaizan tavi:z
ro:n *alida:r* a:soan ta:vi:z
(Knowledge and news are for lecturers. For a lover there is the beloved's face.)

* * *

az zuli:xa: yo:safas axba:r
lekhtas asi harvina: *dida:r*

(From Zuleikha to Yusuf take this news. Write to him that he must show his face.)

ya:ba laila: zi qais lekhsa xat
mi:l an sa: nafi:s lekhsa xat

(Or from Laila to Qais write the letter. Get good ink and write the letter.)

* * *

ya^{dh}vai salik chukh tsa ifgham bo:z asqun bath
parta az dil vir^{di} azam bo:z asqun bath

(If you are a seeker, listen to love's song carefully. Read from the heart and listen to love's song.)

Khazir Malik Safai has another quality which no other Kashmiri poet had. He could write two (and sometimes four) *ghazal*, *vatsans*, *nazems* and encomiums in one rhyme and one metre. His poetic collection is structured round 136 Arabic letters. Every letter is the rhyme of either two, three or four poems. Thus there are 111 songs in one collection, though we have found some more poems also. It is worth noting how skillful he was in handling words, and how proficient he was in his language. This amply proves that Safai was not only a *suī* but also poet who consciously experimented with words. He, while preserving the tradition, added new dimensions to Kashmiri poetry.

(Note: For the poetic lines, see the 'Selections' below—Tr.)

Safai wrote love *vatsans* also which have the intrinsic beauty of encomium. In such poems, Safai appears mad in the love of this beloved (i.e., the Prophet) and wonders in search of him in villages, towns and cities, the world over. Although in such poems we do not find Safai's excellence, they, nonetheless, tell us that he had a thorough knowledge of geography, which indirectly provides an insight into the stages of spiritual development:

(Note: The poetic lines quoted here can be found in the Selection below—Tr.)

After reading his poetry, it becomes clear that Safai had a through knowledge of Persian poetry also. This is evident from his translations of Jami, Nazami, Ansuri, Khusro, Hafiz and Rumi. On the one hand, he recognised and respected these great minds, on the other hand, he had full confidence in his own talent and skill:

xusruvan ja:miyan bayi sarvarei:
madah canix lekhih mubarak ba'd
(Khusro, Jami and Sarvari wrote you eulogies)

um sifat safiyan va:ra sa:f kariyi
volai saah parye: chakh parizad
(These qualities were further clarified by Safai. Come Queen
fairy, you are born of a fairy)

madah can van ansariyai farsi: tazi:
safiyan kariye: hura paryei
(Ansuri wrote your eulogy in Persian and Safai in Kashmiri. O,
charming fairy).

ja:mi: niza:mi sehri: ta gami:
safi: haq ju: subhan Allah
(Jami, Nizami, Shahri, Gami and Safi are all speakers of truth)

It has already been mentioned that Safai did not write many *ghazals*. Even in the available *ghazals*, he has neither been able to achieve any unique position nor has been successful in fulfilling thematic and structural conditions of the form. This could be perhaps because Safai did not pay any attention to this form of poetry deliberately or he must have been ignorant of its demands.

Although, he does experiment with the *ghazal* form, thematically the *ghazals* he confused are a description of the physique of his love which is a clear indication that he was greatly influenced by Rasul Mir to the extent that he used his (Rasul Mir's) rhymes and rhythms. Despite this,

his language and style are worth studying. He does not lag behind and maintains his individuality:

jā:nā:nā xosro subhā:n Allah
 ālḍa:r āljō: subhā:n Allah
 — Rasul Mir—

āḍarr mah ro: subhā:n Allah
 gulzar xosbo: subhā:n Allah
 — Safai—

(Note:- See the 'Selections' for more lines of this poems.)

Sometimes he beautifully describes the physique of his beloved in such a way that we are forced to admit his talent:

gatshtavesyei ya:r vuchān ru:m chāya: sām cha:
 mo:i pare:sān tas sabi farik cha ya:sām cha:
 (O, friend; go and see whether my love is in Rome or Syri. Is it that she has untidy hair or is it that the night is dark or she has been caught up).

zuluf kokul cha: tausund geiso:i sunmbul ya:kamand
 musuk cha zanjir dha ya: mo:i siyā:h cha: l:m cha:
 (Are her tresses curly or hyacinth, or they mesh? Are they fragrance, a chain, black or curved.)

qad co:n samsā:d ya:sarvi ā:za:d
 xam kor am tsandan kulye: lo:
 (You are as tall as the cypress. (Seeing this) the sandal has tree stooped.)

gums az rox āull sabnam bargul
 buma zai chai jadvalei lo:
 (Wipe the sweat from your face. It is like dew on flowers. Your eyebrows are charming.)

xanda yeli travith gand mandchavith
 ba:gh ba:gh kam gul phalyei lo:
 (When you laughed, every sweetness was ashamed. Many flowers bloomed in the garden)

Khazir Malik Safai paid attention to the *nazem* form also. His poems, allegories and translations show that he understood the structural qualities of this form. Although a full understanding of the *nazem* form is discerned in Abdul & Ahad Azad, Sheikh ul Alam's "Gongal Namah" is the initial form of Kashmiri *nazem* which was practised by Sufi poets also. Thus he paid special attention to this form and as a result poems like "Shasrang", "Dapyomas nate dopnam", "Shunyah Gatshtai" and "Nai" were produced. Safai wrote *nazems* which include "Wahdanu lasharik", "He valo ha yaro hai", and "Ashqan rang". Not only this, he translated some Persian allegories and gave a new dimension to Kashmiri Sufi poetry, especially Sufi *nazam*. Such allegories include "Behram Go", "Hazrat zannon Misri", "paz ta pata Mogul", etc. Although his *nazems* deal with the esoteric we discern diversity of form as well. Some *nazems* comprise two and some four parts. On the whole, despite preserving the rhymes throughout the poem, each poem begins with a new initiatory verse. Though such poems are long, the poet is successful in maintaining continuity of thought and emotion.

(Note: The poem quoted here can be found in "Selections" below—Tr.).

Notes

1. Karbala is in Iraq. It was here that Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Husain was martyred (Tr).
2. *** indicate that some lines have been left out (Tr).
3. I will be using 'eulogy', 'eulogium', 'encomium' and 'hymn' rather interchangeably (Tr.)

A Selection

Encomiums

Translator's note: In the encomiums (na't) Safai addresses the Prophet of Islam, Mohammad. English words cannot fully describe the poet's devotion and faith. That is why no attempt has been made to translate these into English. I'm only giving a phonetic transcription of the poems.

trav raftar ya: rasul Allah
hav dā:dar ya: rasul Allah

ku:t ka:la: inmberzalan chu xa:b
trav xumar ya: rasul Allah

tharv barsar amaimai ko:fu:r
harv dasta:r ya: rasul: Allah

vazuha: ro:i haviv har su:
tsali zanga:r ya: rasul: Allah

tas bura:qas khasith yiyiv yus te:z
baraq raftar ya: rasu:l Allah

Kond firatquk dāvan zaxman nis
misli so:fa:r ya: rasu:l Allah

casmi me:za:gh kar nazar pholi ba:gh
gul ta gulzar ya: rasu:l Allah

lavhi manfuz co:n daftari bul
daraj tu:mar ya: rasu:l Allah

mo:i xosbo:i gaso:i valail
chi musukda:r ya: rasu:l Allah

mad abro chi su:rai nu:nas
misli tarva:r ya: rasu:l Allah

can mijga:n a:soan sona:n
te:z misma:r ya: rasu:l Allah

alif bi:ni: yaya:n chu saiful Allah
dil chu afga:r ya: rasu:l Allah

lab chi la:li yaman ta dqn d moxtai
duri sahsava:r ya: rasu:l Allah

ka:rva:has chi ru:dmat tanha:
ka:nhna ghamxa:r ya: rasu:l Allah

xa:ri hijra:n chi tsa:mafi si:nas
kam gira:h da:r ya: rasu:l Allah

can asha:b di:na kis ba:ghas
tse:r dayva:r ya: rasu:l Allah

sani: asnayn dar sabi hijrat
chui jalvda:r ya: rasu:l Allah

sa:h fa:re:q di:na kis mulkas
carax sayar ya: rasu:l Allah

mubrahan gov zi ja:mial furqa:n
ganj asra:r ya: rasu:l Allah

asadu Allah haid ar yazda:n
se:ri jabba:r ya: yasu:l Allah

az safai: karum vafai: karim
bar jafa: kar ya: rasu:l Allah

Hymns

I have used 'hymn', 'eulogy' and 'encomium' rather interchangeably. The following two hymns are on a Muslim saint of Kashmir, Baba Hardi Reshi, popularly

known as 'resh mo:l' and a Muslim jurist, Abu Haniefa. Here the poet eulogises both by highlighting their different aspects of life—knowledge, conduct, etc. They are just transcribed phonetically:

chukh gardu:n jina:b ya:ri:si:
chukh brazan a:fa:b ya: ri:si:

chukh tsa marham bare:s dil re:sa:n
si:na sani: kaba:b ya: ri:si:

karta vasil manzili maqsu:d
ku:t ka:la: aza:b ya: ri:si:

malkan kormutan tsa ha:kimi kul
balki maliki riqa:b ya: risi:

ga:sa kui kafas don khoran lagith
ru:zi az iksa:b ya: ri:si:

cani atva:r a:da di a:tha:n
sunadi a:njina:b ya: ri:shi:

na:mda:r ta sahsava:r chukh
hamqadam hamriqa:b ya: ri:si:

silsila co:n soharvardi o:s
chui kamand o tana:b ya: ri:si:

rehnuma: sayx hamza maxdu:m
tas tsa naib mana:b ya: ri:si:

kasiran hyud tsqa bod bali ne'mat
yi: chu lubiluba:b ya: ri:si:

dim safai: me di:nakis bagghas
rang bo co:n gula:b ya: risi:

za:lula: bu hani:fa noma:n
bulvafa: bu hani:fa noma:m

chus sirajulumam laqab kha:ra:n
mustafa: bu: hani:fa: noma:n

muqṭaḍḍi hiv chi a:lmaxh ulma:
muqṭaḍḍa: bu hani:fa: noma:n

daradmandan hyundui safa:xa:nai
rut dawa: bu hani:fa: noma:n

a:fa:b chu ḍi:nakis ba:ghas'
purzia: bu hani: fa: noma:m

duriḍruj muhammad arabi:
be:baha: bu:hani:fa noma:n

Vatsan

latyei kar ba:la ya:ras thukh thukh
manz baha:ras zethha:ras thukh thukh
(O, friend! knock at my beloved's. Knock in spring, summer
and in autumn.)

rox pholan zeba: niga:ras thukh thukh
vuzmalan manz nav baha:ras thukh thukh
(Her cheeks will light up, knock at her door. She is a spring
among lightnings, knock at her door.)

gu:r kartas ḍu:rakan kya: chus suban
gra:yi mara:n sona ḍui:ran heribon
(Swing her for she looks beautiful with ear-rings, look how she
swings her golden ear-rings.)

go:sva:ran moxtaha:ras thukh thukh
manz baha:ras ze:xoth haras thukh thukh
(To ear-rings and necklace, in mid spring, summer and
autumn thukh thukh.)

so:x casman kya chu gulrox pholavan
ḍo:s ḍo:sa:khoni manz heth lalavun
(Cheerful eyes and a blossoming face. Lull her in your lap.)

vara kartas manz kina:ras thukh thukh
manz baharas zeth ha:ras thukh thukh
(Do if fully in the middle and corner thukh thukh. In mid
spring, summer and autumn thukh thukh.)

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ay dari:gha: chum hiva:n andiyum cara:r
casmi ba:da:man sara:buk chus zuina:r
(Alas! He takes my inner rest. In her almond eyes she has
intoxication o wine.)

xasmx mas'is purxuma:ras thukh thukh
manz baha:ras ze:th ha:ras thukh thukh
(To the angry and the intoxicated thukh thukh. In mid spring,
summer and autumn thukh thukh.)

a:is hijra:n chum su:zis ana:n
kenh xabar chamna: lakha:n chus kya: vana:n
(The fire of separation pains me. I don't know what I am
writing and what I am saying.)

tra:v vasluk a:b na:ras thukh thukh
manz baha:ras ze:th ha:ras thukh thukh
(This fire can be extinguished on meeting.)

ya:ra kal cham na:ra kal manz si:nasai
go:m gailat mezhabas tai di:nsai
(O, friend! I am burning in the heart. I have become careless
about my religion.)

marhaba: tas di:ndaras thukh thukh
manz baha:ras ze:th ha:ras thukh thukh
(Praises to the religious minded...)

mas' ghafat chus go:mut xaste xara:b
chus pyomut si:ma:b vas dar iztara:b
(I am careless and have gone to seed. I am fallen like mercury
and I am tense.)

vantai tas husya:ras thukh thukh
manz baha:ras ze:th ha:ras thukh thukh
(Tell that guileful person! thukh thukh...)

vasalo faslan manz kara:n chum az'a ka:l
chus na parva: da:la ma:ra:n ba:ba:l
(She dilly-dallies about the meeting. She does not care but
reams about on the hills)

intiza:ras ku:t pra:ras thukh thukh
manz baha:ras ze:th ha:ras thukh thukh
(How long should I wait for her thukh thukh...)

kathan da:r latiyei
be chus ta:n da:r latiyei
Love! Listen to me.
Love! I'm an earthly person.

isolan andar chu kostu:r
dazan kaya: as qa ponpu:r
In fire holes is the Kastoore
How the love-lorn moth is burning!

vazan kya: sa:z santu:r
grazan se:ta:r latiyei
What music flows from the santoor!
And from the sitar, my love.

isa van tam ya:r lot gov
paran satan su mot gov
Tell me where love has gone.
He has gone with the strangers.

ba pya:ra:n a:re ket gov
gotshum di:da:r latiyei
I am eagerly waiting, where is he?
I want to meet him my love.

vanai xatoxa:l tam sund
calan tai ca:l tamsund
Shall I tell you about his, physique,
His gait and conduct.

thazar iqba:l tamsund
chu kuth anha:r latyei
Look at his, eminent position
And his graceful behaviour, my love!

dekas chus nu:ri sarmad
roxas tarti:b abjad
His forehead has eternal light
His face has the arrangement of the alphabet.

Sahi: purmad mussada
nasab zam ja:r laḥei
Everything is in perfect order,
Everything is fixed in its place.

alif bi:ni: dahan ji:m
siya:h gayso:i chis hi:m
The eyes are straight and the mouth is perfect
The hair is black and curly.

zuluf zanjir chis ji:m
siya:h sehna:r laḥei
The locks of hair are curly.
They are black python, my love.

The poem given here has religious overtones. Some of its lines have been quoted in the preceding chapter. It can be seen there.—Tr.)

az dīl tsakat zikri xuda:
ti: aval axar chui muda:
In your heart remember God
That's the aim from beginning to end.

Ya:n na:v tamsund chukh heva:n
labaykh a:Tav chui diva:n
The moment you call Him
Yes He hears and answers you.

hardam yiṭhai pathen nida.
ā aval axar chuimuda
Every time you call Him like this
that's the aim from beginning to end.

eatsh xu:ʂ ja:na:nsai
moi gatsh cava:n maixa:nsai
Be in love with that beloved
Go on drinking at the cavern

nai asaq tra:vi sada:
fi aval axar chuimuda:
His love will never desert you
that is the aim from beginning to end.

rath mithli mu:sa ko:hitu:r
gatsh mahav dar sa:m sahu:r
Like Moses hold onto Sinai be engrossed in him morning and
evening.

hardam dapus ja:nam fida
fi: aval axar chuimuda:
Every time say I lay my life for you, that is the aim from
beginning to end.

"az gham tsalan muba:rak"
van baydilan muba:rak
az gham tsalan:muba:rak
(Say to the heartless, mubarak. Now sorrows will go, mubarak.)

Sarsabaz gov diluk ba:gh
anmbar chaka:n chube:da:1
(The heart's garden became green fragrance it emits pure)

ay dilbar gulanda:m
rox co:n nu:ri isla:m
(O, my heart, tender flower! Your face is Islam's light.)

chui a:sqan hyundui da:m
da:na: dilan muba:rak
(This is the lover's price to the wise hearts muba:rak.)

ay dilbar suman be:
sombul chi can ge:so:
(O, my heart! fragrant Hyacinth is your hair.)

kho:vat *dochin t*aharso:
 katan va:an muba:rak
 (Left, right and everywhere. How many would be caught,
 muba:rak.)

roxa:r kui su partav
 be:ho:s a:lma: gov
 (O, the light of that face! The world has gone into a swoon!)

da:na: *dilav ta rindav*
 vuch vuzmalan muba:rak
 (The wise and the reckless have seen him in the lightnings,
 mubarak.)

si:sei sara:b cavith
 husya:r kat pavith
 (Many a wise man lost himself Having drink from your goblet.)

Nazm

O, friend! Get my love to me I have a request to make of him.
 I have a desire: am I keen to see him, I'm restless.
 Come, O, my friend!
 Go to him with my please so that his love for me returns.
 Tell him to forget all differences and all quarrels.
 My life I spent in settling the disputes.
 Who is misleading him?
 For God's sake tell him to do something about us.
 Come, O, my friend!
 Love's intense heart I'm bearing inside my breast.
 The writtings of fate no wise man has ever known.
 What is there in my fate?
 It is not new, it is the old writing.
 Slowly and silently my love left me.
 Come, O, my friend!
 O, cruel love you are burning my heart.
 You have no justice, you don't keep promise.
 Like a flute I'm crying.
 As autumn am I shaking.
 What has fate in store for me?
 Come, O, my friend!

Separation was great even for Laila Majnoon and Yousuf Zulekha. Being hidden Yusuf came out and was searched for in the market.

Could not maintain calm.
The separation made them mad.

Mad Majnoon roamed in by night and broke walls and forts.

Come, O, my friend!

Some day my in-laws will call me and ask me to be ready. Friends and relatives, family and clan will assemble round me. Come to me my good luck.

All will help.

Song they will sing'O bright bride, your dress in your art!

Come, O, my friend!

The lucky you left this world, your colour is red.

Heaven's fairy, a rose branch, blossoming you are fragrant.

Here you had to work.

There you will be famous.

The brave and the chiefs helped you, kind is God.

Come, O, my friend!

The light of religion and faith shines in you and you're clean all.

Following the brave you searched for that faithfulness
God made you luck,

You found that acquaintance.

Board the throne with King Solomon and fly in the air.

Come, O, my friend!

Khazir Malik Safai was a multidimensional poet of the Kashmiri language who tried his hand almost all poetic forms, giving proof of his creative talent and command over the language. He was greatly influenced by predecessors like Mohmud Gami, Rasul Mir, Shams Faqir, Rehman Dar, Waza Mohmud and Ahmad Batwari. He

recognised the creative supremacy of Jami, Nizami, Ansari and Hafiz, and his own potential in creative writing. Though a traditionalist, he was new and novel in many ways.

